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Scots Opera Project The Jolly Beggars

by Robert Burns
with music by Alan Fleming-Baird

Available to watch from 2.30pm on the 22nd of January 2022

[Click on the image above to access the film](#)



Recitativo

When lyart leaves bestrow the yird,
Or wavering like the bauckie-bird,
Bedim cauld Boreas' blast;
When hailstanes drive wi' bitter skyte,
And infant frosts begin to bite,
In hoary cranreuch drest;
Ae night at e'en a merry core
O' randie, gangrel bodies,
In Poesie-Nansie's held the splore,
To drink their orra duddies;
Wi' quaffing an' laughing,
They ranted an' they sang,
Wi' jumping an' thumping,
The vera girdle rang,

First, neist the fire, in auld red rags,
Ane sat, weel brac'd wi' mealy bags,

And knapsack a' in order;
His doxy lay within his arm;
Wi' usquebae an' blankets warm
She blinkit on her sodger;
An' aye he gies the tozie drab
The tither skelpin' kiss,
While she held up her greedy gab,
Just like an aumous dish;
Ilk smack still, did crack still,
Just like a cadger's whip;
Then staggering an' swaggering
He roar'd this ditty up

Air

I am a son of Mars who have been in many wars,
And show my cuts and scars wherever I come;
This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.

My 'prenticeship I past where my leader breath'd his last,
When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abram:
and I served out my trade when the gallant game was play'd,
And the Morro low was laid at the sound of the drum.

I lastly was with Curtis among the floating batt'ries,
And there I left for witness an arm and a limb;
Yet let my country need me, with Elliot to head me,
I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of a drum.

And now tho' I must beg, with a wooden arm and leg,
And many a tatter'd rag hanging over my bum,
I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle, and my callet,
As when I used in scarlet to follow a drum.

What tho' with hoary locks, I must stand the winter shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks oftentimes for a home,
When the t'other bag I sell, and the t'other bottle tell,
I could meet a troop of hell, at the sound of a drum.

Recitativo

He ended; and the kebars sheuk,
Aboon the chorus roar;

While frighted rattons backward leuk,
An' seek the benmost bore:
A fairy fiddler frae the neuk,
He skirl'd out, encore!
But up arose the martial chuck,
An' laid the loud uproar.

Air

I once was a maid, tho' I cannot tell when,
And still my delight is in proper young men;
Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie,
No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie,

The first of my loves was a swaggering blade,
To rattle the thundering drum was his trade;
His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch;
The sword I forsook for the sake of the church:
He ventur'd the soul, and I risked the body,
'Twas then I proved false to my sodger laddie.

Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified sot,
The regiment at large for a husband I got;
From the gilded spontoon to the fife I was ready,
I asked no more but a sodger laddie.

But the peace it reduc'd me to beg in despair,
Till I met old boy in a Cunningham fair,
His rags regimental, they flutter'd so gaudy,
My heart it rejoic'd at a sodger laddie.

And now I have liv'd - I know not how long,
And still I can join in a cup and a song;
But whilst with both hands I can hold the glass steady,
Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie.

Recitativo

Poor Merry-Andrew, in the neuk,
Sat guzzling wi' a tinkler-hizzie;
They mind't na wha the chorus teuk,

Between themselves they were sae busy:
At length, wi' drink an' courting dizzy,
He stoiter'd up an' made a face;
Then turn'd an' laid a smack on Grizzie,
Synne tun'd his pipes wi' grave grimace.

Air

Sir Wisdom's a fool when he's fou;
Sir Knave is a fool in a session;
He's there but a 'prentice I trow,
But I am a fool by profession.

My grannie she bought me a beuk,
An' I held awa to the school;
I fear I my talent misteuk,
But what will ye hae of a fool?

For drink I would venture my neck;
A hizzie's the half of my craft;
But what could ye other expect
Of ane that's avowedly daft?

I ance was tied up like a stirk,
For civilly swearing and quaffin;
I ance was abus'd i' the kirk,
For towsing a lass i' my daffin.

Poor Andrew that tumbles for sport,
Let naebody name wi' a jeer;
There's even, I'm tauld, i' the Court
A tumbler ca'd the Premier.

Observ'd ye yon reverend lad
Mak faces to tickle the mob;
He rails at our mountebank squad,
It's rivalship just i' the job.

And now my conclusion I'll tell,
For faith I'm confoundedly dry;
The chiel that's a fool for himsel',
Guid Lord! he's far dafter than I.

Recitativo

Then niest outspak a raucle carlin,
Wha kent fu' weel to cleek the sterlin;
For mony a pursie she had hooked,
An' had in mony a well been douked;
Her love had been a Highland laddie,
But weary fa' the waefu' woodie!
Wi' sighs an' sobs she thus began
To wail her braw John Highlandman.

Air

A Highland lad my love was born,
The Lalland laws he held in scorn;
But he still was faithfu' to his clan,
My gallant, braw John Highlandman.

Sing hey my braw John Highlandman!
Sing ho my braw John Highlandman!
There's not a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman.

With his philibeg an' tartan plaid,
An' guid claymore down by his side,
The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
My gallant, braw John Highlandman.

We ranged a' from Tweed to Spey,
An' liv'd like lords an' ladies gay;
For a Lalland face he feared none,
My gallant, braw John Highlandman.

They banish'd him beyond the sea.
But ere the bud was on the tree,
Adown my cheeks the pearls ran,
Embracing my John Highlandman.

But, och! they catch'd him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast:
My curse upon them every one,
They've hang'd my braw John Highlandman!

And now a widow, I must mourn
The pleasures that will ne'er return:
The comfort but a hearty can,
When I think on John Highlandman.

Sing hey my braw John Highlandman!
Sing ho my braw John Highlandman!
There's not a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman.

Recitativo

A pigmy scraper wi' his fiddle,
Wha us'd at trystes an' fairs to driddle.
Her strappin limb and gausy middle
(He reach'd nae higher)
Had hol'd his heartie like a riddle,
An' blawn't on fire.

Wi' hand on hainch, and upward e'e,
He croon'd his gamut, one, two, three,
Then in an arioso key,
The wee Apollo
Set off wi' allegretto glee
His giga solo.

Air

Let me ryke up to dight that tear,
An' go wi' me an' be my dear;
An' then your every care an' fear
May whistle owre the lave o't.

I am a fiddler to my trade,
An' a' the tunes that e'er I played,
The sweetest still to wife or maid,
Was whistle owre the lave o't.

At kirns an' weddins we'se be there,
An' O sae nicely's we will fare!
We'll bowse about till Daddie Care
Sing whistle owre the lave o't.

Sae merrily's the banes we'll pyke,
An' sun oursel's about the dyke;
An' at our leisure, when ye like,
We'll whistle owre the lave o't .

But bless me wi' your heav'n o' charms,
An' while I kittle hair on thairms,
Hunger, cauld, an' a' sic harms,
May whistle owre the lave o't .

I am a fiddler to my trade,
An' a' the tunes that e'er I played,
The sweetest still to wife or maid,
Was whistle owre the lave o't.

Recitativo

Her charms had struck a sturdy caird,
As weel as poor gut-scraper;
He tak's the fiddler by the beard,
An' draws a roosty rapier
He swoor, by a' was swearing worth,
To speet him like a pliver,
Unless he would from that time forth
Relinquish her for ever.

Wi' ghastly e'e poor tweedle-dee
Upon his hunkers bended,
An' pray'd for grace wi' ruefu' face,
An' so the quarrel ended.
But tho' his little heart did grieve
When round the tinkler prest her,
He feign'd to snirtle in his sleeve,
When thus the caird address'd her:

Air

My bonie lass, I work in brass,
A tinkler is my station:
I've travell'd round all Christian ground
In this my occupation;
I've taen the gold, an' been enrolled
In many a noble squadron;
But vain they search'd when off I march'd

To go an' clout the cauldron.
I've taen the gold, an' been enrolled
In many a noble squadron;
But vain they search'd when off I march'd
To go an' clout the cauldron.

Despise that shrimp, that wither'd imp,
With a' his noise an' cap'rin;
An' take a share with those that bear
The budget and the apron!
And by that stowp! my faith an' houp,
And by that dear Kilbaigie,
If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
May I ne'er weet my craigie.
And by that stowp! my faith an' houp,
And by that dear Kilbaigie,
If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
May I ne'er weet my craigie.

Recitativo

The caird prevail'd - th'unblushing fair
In his embraces sunk;
Partly wi' love o'ercome sae sair,
An' partly she was drunk:
Sir Violino, with an air
That show'd a man o' spunk,
Wish'd unison between the pair,
An' made the bottle clunk
To their health that night.

But hurchin Cupid shot a shaft,
That play'd a dame a shavie
The fiddler rak'd her, fore and aft,
Behint the chicken cavie.
Her lord, a wight of Homer's craft,
Tho' limpin wi' the spavie,
He hirpl'd up, an' lap like daft,
An' shor'd them Dainty Davie.
O' boot that night.

He was a care-defying blade
As ever Bacchus listed!

Tho' Fortune sair upon him laid,
His heart, she ever miss'd it.
He had no wish but - to be glad,
Nor want but - when he thirsted;
He hated nought but - to be sad,
An' thus the muse suggested
His sang that night.

Air

I am a Bard of no regard,
Wi' gentle folks an' a' that;
But Homer-like, the glowrin byke,
Frae town to town I draw that.

For a' that, an' a' that,
An' twice as muckle's a' that;
I've lost but ane, I've twa behin',
I've wife eneugh for a' that.

I never drank the Muses' stank,
Castalia's burn, an' a' that;
But there it streams an' richly reams,
My Helicon I ca' that.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave an' a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it still
A mortal sin to thraw that.

In raptures sweet, this hour we meet,
Wi' mutual love an' a' that;
But for how lang the flie may stang,
Let inclination law that.

Their tricks an' craft hae put me daft,
They've taen me in, an' a' that;
But clear your decks, and here's - "The Sex!"
I like the jads for a' that.

For a' that, an' a' that,
An' twice as muckle's a' that;
My dearest bluid, to do them guid,

They're welcome till't for a' that.

Recitativo

So sang the bard - and Nansie's wa's
Shook with a thunder of applause,
Re-echo'd from each mouth!
They toom'd their pocks, they pawn'd their duds,
They scarcely left to co'er their fuds,
To quench their lowin drouth:
Then owre again, the jovial thrang
The poet did request
To lowse his pack an' wale a sang,
A ballad o' the best;
He rising, rejoicing,
Between his twa Deborahs,
Looks round him, an' found them
Impatient for the chorus.

Air

See the smoking bowl before us,
Mark our jovial ragged ring!
Round and round take up the chorus,
And in raptures let us sing.

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

What is title, what is treasure,
What is reputation's care?
If we lead a life of pleasure,
'Tis no matter how or where!

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.



Creative Team

Director/Producer – David Douglas

Piano – Jennifer Redmond

Composer – Alan Fleming-Baird

Scots Language – Dr Michael Dempster

Audio Recording – Jason Hull & Martin J Windebank

Filmed & Editing - Martin J Windebank

Cast

Narrator – Dr Michael Dempster

The Solder – David Douglas

Doxie – Rachael Brimley

Merry Andrew – Colin Murray

Carlin – Ulrike Wutscher

The Fiddler – Colin Murray

The Tinker – Rachael Brimley

The Bard – David Douglas

Composer - **Alan Fleming Baird**

Alan Fleming-Baird studied with the composer Sir John Tavener before receiving a scholarship to attend the Royal College of Music in London, followed by post-graduate studies at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow (supported by the John Mather Scholarship) and, after gaining a Masters in “Music In The Environment” at the University of the Highlands and Islands, he is currently a PhD student at Glasgow University studying composition and linguistics.

He has composed four operas, many large-scale orchestral works (including three concertos), several large choral pieces, as well as many works accessible, and regularly performed, by young and amateur musicians. His music has been performed and commissioned by many of the professional orchestras in the UK and abroad as well as some of the leading chamber musicians and soloists.

He is currently the Artists Director of the Tannahill Arts Festival, and recently received a Creative Scotland Award to record his music with the Maxwell Quartet for a disc of his music released in 2022.

Director/Soldier & Bard - **David Douglas**

David Douglas is a Singer from the Ayrshire. David trained at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and the Royal Northern College of Music and has performed for some of the World's most prestigious companies including: Les Arts Florissants, Glyndbourne Festival Opera, English National Opera, Scottish Opera, Dartington Advanced Opera, The Britten Pears Young Artist Program, The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, The Dunedin Consort and Opera North. David enjoys taking a lead role in community music and outreach projects, piloting the Singing Doctors project for Welsh National Opera, forming the arts organisations, Ayrshire Opera Experience, Scots Opera Project and Townhouse

Recitals. David is also a workshop leader for Disney Theatricals and Scottish Opera's Disney Musicals in School and a vocal tutor for Scottish Opera's Breath Cycle.

Being born and bred in Ayrshire David's roots are steeped in Scottish traditional music which he performs regularly, recently releasing the album 'The Sweetest Hours, songs by Robert Burns'. David created a pioneering project to perform operas in Scots and Gaelic, which led to him perform live on BBC Radio Scotland and Scottish Television. Performance highlights include: Actéon in Charpentier's Actéon, Orpheus in Charpentier's The Descent O' Orpheus Tae The Underwarl, Tamino in Mozart's The Magic Flute and Acis in Handel's Acis and Galatea.

David has performed in Paris, New York, Miami, Dallas and Chicago. More recently David has been a guest entertainer on-board various cruise ships, performing and travelling to places such as San Diego, San Francisco, Mexico, Chile, Peru and South Africa.

Scots Language/Narrator - **Dr Michael Dempster**

Dr Michael Dempster is a first language Scots speaker, writer, and director of the Scots Language Centre. He was Scotland's second Scots Scriever. As a librettist he's produced, with the Scots Opera Project, Scots translations of Mozart's Magic Flute and Purcell's Dido & Aeneas. Working in film and theatre he's produced and performed in a number of works, most recently staging adaptations of the narrative poetry of the older Scots Makars, Robert Henryson and William Dunbar. He has also produced the first Manga in Scots and written the first original Comic in literary Scots.

Pianist/Musical Director - **Jennifer Redmond**

Jennifer Redmond read music at Cardiff University before she went on to postgraduate studies in piano performance at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and piano accompaniment at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland - studying with Richard Ormrod, Simon Lepper and Graeme McNaught. As a student she performed for Lady Walton and the Sir William Walton Foundation in Ischia and took part in master classes with Malcolm Martineau. She has performed all over the UK and Europe. Recent performances include concerts at the Theater Akzent Vienna, King's Theatre Glasgow and in Edinburgh, at the Lyceum, St. Mary's and St. Giles' Cathedrals. She was invited by the First Minister of Scotland to play at Bute House in Edinburgh and performed on the BBC Radio Scotland programme 'Classics Unwrapped'. Jennifer is also a piano teacher at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Junior Department.

Doxie & Tinker - **Rachael Brimley**

Rachael Brimley is a graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (formerly RSAMD), where she studied with Judith Howarth. Operatic experience includes Papagena The Magic Flute (Scottish Opera), Musetta La Boheme (Paisley Opera), Violetta La Traviata (Edinburgh Grand Opera), Governess The Turn of the Screw (ENO Opera Works Showcase). Rachael was a Young Artist for Opera Holland Park in 2015 singing Ellen Lakme and returning in 2018 to cover the role of Ermyngarde in the UK premiere of Mascagni's Isabeau. She regularly sings in the freelance Chorus of Scottish Opera, performing in productions including Nixon in China, La Boheme, Tosca and The Gondoliers.

Rachael has a passion for organising and producing, often combining her work as a freelance opera singer and arts administrator. Most recently, working with school children and community groups, producing workshops and performances for a diverse group of people and projects.

Working with Scots Opera Project for a few years now, Rachael has loved singing in both Scots language and Gaelic and performing with the company. She sang Damon Acis and Galatea and premiered the roles of Doxie and Tinker The Jolly Beggars in January 2022

The Widow Carlin - **Ulrike Wutscher**

Ulrike Wutscher is an Austrian mezzo-soprano based in Scotland. Her roles have included Hermia in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (Britten) with director Olivia Fuchs and music director Diego Masson and Daniel in "Belshazzar" (Handel) with director Emma Rivlin and music director Nicholas Kraemer in London. Since 2016 she regularly sings with The ScotsOpera Experience including Junon and Hyale in "Acteon" (Charpentier), the 3rd Lady in "The Magic Flute" (Mozart), the Sorceress in "Dido and Aeneas" (Purcell) and Apollo and Pluton in "Orpheus" (Charpentier).

She also is a keen recitalist and concert singer. Highlights of recent performances are the alto solos in Mendelsohn's "Elijah" and Handel's "Messiah" with the Stirling University Choir, Mozart's "Requiem" in Austria and Mozart's "Mass in c minor" with the Rosenethe Singers at Dunblane Cathedral.

A very successful recital programme brought her to the Sommerkonzerte in der Schubertkirche in Vienna, the Edinburgh Fringe, the Wanstead Fringe in London and the Netherlands.

Ulrike studied singing with Lydia Vierlinger at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien (MA in 2012 with distinction). She continued her training in London at Trinity Laban with Sophie Grimmer and Helen Yorke, where she completed her Postgraduate Artists Diploma in 2015 (distinction).

She always aims to improve her performance by attending masterclasses and coachings with outstanding musicians such as Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Graham Johnson, Julius Drake, Eugene Asti, Alison Wells, Norman Shetler and Michael Chance.

Merry Andrew & Fiddler - **Colin Murray**

Colin Murray is a Glasgow based baritone and graduate of the Alexander Gibson Opera School at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

His previous roles include, Kaiser Uberall *Kaiser Von Atlantis*, Don Alfonso *Così fan Tutte*, Father *Hansel und Gretel* and principal roles in all five of Rossini's Venetian One Act Operas. He made his role debut at the Grange Park Opera festival in summer '21 in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Ivan the Terrible*. He has also covered Antonio in G&S's *The Gondoliers* with Scottish Opera and Belcore in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'amore* at the New Generation Festival in Florence.

His Scots Opera Project roles include, Narrator, Tannahill the Opera, Polyphemus, Acis & Galatea and Merry Andrew & Fiddler, The Jolly Beggars.

He is an in-demand concert soloist, and award-winning ensemble singer.

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