

Churnal Jiu as Churnal Jea (Churning Song)

Mona Douglas from Mrs Faragher, Kirk Michael, 1919.

Allegretto

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It consists of four systems of music. Each system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The piano part is in 6/8 time and features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The vocal line is in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and includes various ornaments and fingerings. The lyrics are in Gaelic and describe the process of churning butter.

System 1: *mf* Churn - al jiu as

System 2: churn - al jea, As goll dy hurn - al mair - agh; Ta wheesh d'- eeym_ er y churn, Cha

System 3: vow - yms stapp - al gleash - agh. O! trooid shiu jiu, as trooid shiu jea, As trooid shiu oill - ey

System 4: mair - agh; Ta wheesh d'- eeym_ er y churn, Cha vow - yms stapp - al gleash - agh!

1. Churnal jiu as churnal jea,
As goll dy hurnal mairagh;
Ta wheesh d'eeym er y churn,
Cha vowym stappal gleashagh.

Co-chiaull

O! trooid shiu jiu, as trooid shiu jea,
As trooid shiu ooilley mairagh;
Ta wheesh d'eeym er y churn,
Cha vowyms stappal gleashagh!

2. Dy tappee nish ta'n eeym cheet,
Ta'n bithag chiu as brishagh;
Ta mish chyndaa y churn ny smoo
Dy haglym eh d' aashagh.

Co-chiaull

3. Ta mish cur bannaght er y churn
Dyn fer erbee ceau scaa er!
Dy chooilley pheigh ta cheet 'sy thie,
Cur cooney lhiam chyndaa eh.

Co-chiaull

This song is a blessing on the churn, and an invitation to all the visitors to the farm to help. Churning the milk to make butter was one of the heavy and tedious jobs in the dairy. Sometimes the butter would come quite quickly. But often the churning would stretch out endlessly, and it would seem as if someone had put the 'evil eye' on the cream.

Performance

Although there is an English translation, the Manx is not difficult. It is well worth learning the song in Manx as the words mimic the slapping of the milk against the sides of the butter-churn in a way that is impossible in the English version.

The rhythm must be very strong and steady - like so many work-songs, the rhythm and the words arose from the sound of the churn, so the song should be sung with strong accents on the first and fourth quavers of each bar.

We churned today and yesterday,
Tomorrow we'll be churning.
There's so much butter on the churn
I cannot stop it turning!

Chorus

O, come all ye that came before
To help us with the churning,
There's so much butter on the churn
I cannot stop it turning!

O quickly comes the butter now,
The cream is growing thicker;
I keep on turning faster yet
To make it gather quicker.

Chorus

I put a blessing on the churn
O look not ill upon it!
O every one that may come in,
Take part with me to turn it.

Chorus

