

Glen. 280. •

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28th January 1927.



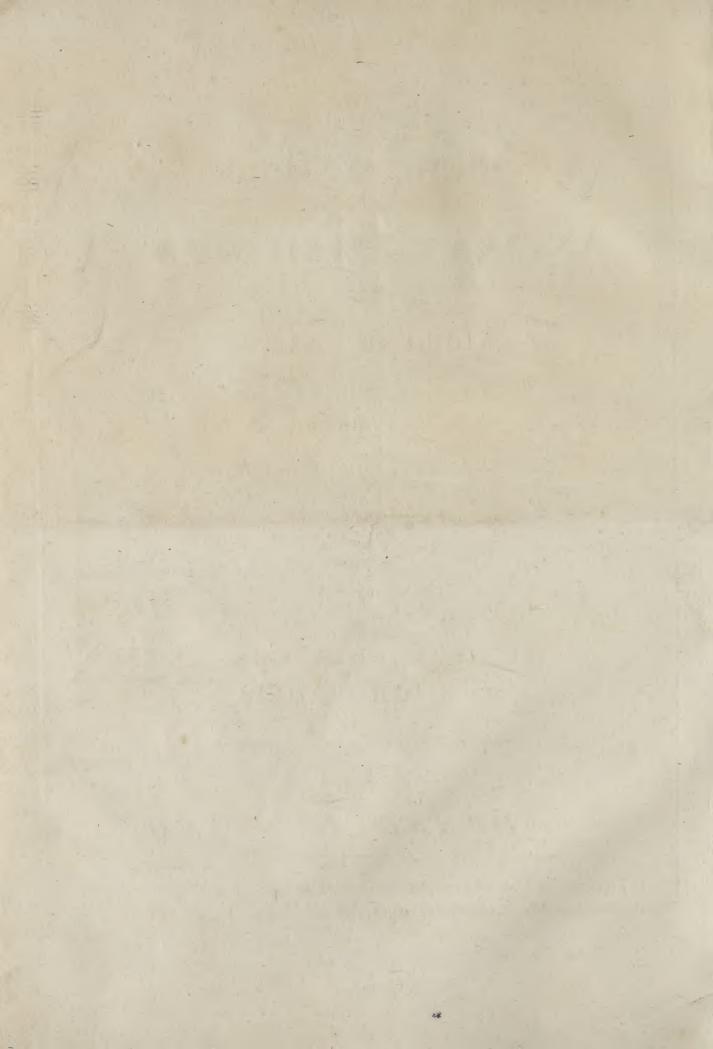




Glen 280 SIC. RISI Containing a variety of sidmired ? lirs never before Published, and also The Compositions of ((C) OLAN and CAROLAN; Collected from the Starpers &c in the different Provinces of THE 野 R L and adapted for the lano-Sorte with a Prefatory Introduction Price in 6 1º07. 1. Bya EDWARD BUNTING. Ent<sup>d</sup> at Stationers Hall

Dub: Publiflid by Hime at his Musical Circulating Library 34 College Green where may be bud Musil Relicks of the Welch Bards by Educ Jones Price 13 English Edis: Price 1-12-10





## PREFACE.

T is an extraordinary fact, that although Ireland has, from a remote antiquity, been celebrated for its cultivation of Mufic, and admitted to be one of the parent countries of that delightful art, the prefent is the first *general* collection of its national airs. Most of them are of such ancient origin, that the names of their authors, and the era in which they were composed, are alike unknown.

The works of fome of its lateft composers, as Connollan and Carolan, have before been felected; but even of these it remained to this day to give accurate copies; while the superior productions of their masters, on whom they had formed their stile, and of whose excellence they have fallen short, are now only partially known in the very Country where they once flouriss. To refcue them from oblivion, and to open a new source of musical delight, the Public are now presented with the first volume of such a Collection, as has for a long time been eagerly defired.

A brief account of the circumftances which led to this Collection, will naturally be expected.

The rapid decrease of the number of itinerant performers on the Irith Harp, with the confequent decline of that tender and expressive instrument, gave the first idea of assembling the remaining harpers dispersed over the different provinces of Ireland. A meeting of them was accordingly procured, at a confiderable expense, by the Gentlemen of Belfast on the 12th of July, 1792, and liberal premiums were distributed amongst them, according to their respective merits.

The compiler of this volume was appointed to attend on that occasion, to take down the various airs played by the different harpers, and was particularly cautioned against adding a single note to the old melodies, which would seem, from inferences that will afterwards be drawn, to have been preferved pure, and handed down unalloyed, through a long succession of ages.

A principal motive to convene this affemblage of the remnant of the Irith Bards, was to procure, while yet attainable, the most approved copies of tunes already in the hands of practitioners, as well as to revive and perpetuate a variety of others extremely ancient, of which there were no copies extant, and which were therefore likely foon to become extinct,

This end was, in a great degree, fecured by the meeting alluded to; and it has fince been perfected by the editor of the prefent work, who made a tour through a principal portion of the kingdom, for the purpose of comparing the music already procured, with that in the possession of harpers in other parts, and of making such additions as would render the work complete.

The work is now before that tribunal, which is the natural judge of its merits. It may however, without prefumption, be alleged, that while public tafte fhall remain fufficiently pure and unadulterated, to be capable of admiring ftrains which lead directly to the heart, the ancient mufic of Ireland will be ftudied with increasing delight. The performer will recollect, that the mufic of a country and its language are analagous. There are idioms and characteristical delicacies in both, to enter into the fpirit of which fome time and practice are requisite: And this is peculiarly the cafe with those compositions, which are the productions of a very diftant period.

We may be permitted to mention a few of the reafons which lead us to believe, that fome portions of the following Mufic, are of high antiquity.

Most of the performers convened at the meeting above-mentioned, were men advanced in life, and they all concurred in one opinion respecting the reputed antiquity of those airs which they called *ancient*. They finited on being interrogated concerning the era of fuch compositions, faying, "They were more ancient than any to which our popular traditions extended."

It would appear, that the old muficians in transmitting this Mufic to us through fo many centuries, treated it with the utmost reverence, as they feem never to have ventured to make the flightest innovation in it during its defcent. This inference we naturally deduce from our finding that harpers collected from parts far distant from one another, and taught by different masters, always played the fame tune on the fame key, with the fame kind of expression, and without a fingle variation in any effential passage, or even in any note. The beauty and regularity, with which the tunes are conflructed, appear furprising. This circumstance feemed the more extraordinary, when it was discovered that the most ancient tunes were, in this respect, the most perfect, admitting of the addition of a Bass with more facility than such as were less ancient. Hence we may conclude, that their authors must neceffarily have been excellent performers, versed in the fcientific part of their profession, and that they had originally a view to the addition of *barmony* in the composition of their pieces. It is remarkable that the performers all tuned their instruments on the fame principle, totally ignorant of the principle itself, and without being able to affign any reason either for their mode of tuning, or of their playing the Bass.

On an impartial review of all these circumstances, we are inclined to believe that those specimens which have survived and been transmitted to us, are only the wreck of better times, the history of which is either lost, or incorrectly recognised, in a confused series of traditions.

Giraldus Cambrenfis, who came over to Ireland in the reign of Henry the Second, gives us a striking account of the state in which he found the Music of this country. This enlightened prelate, a native of Britain, and probably not entirely free from the prejudices that were then entertained against the Irish; a man well acquainted with the fine arts in general, and with Music in particular, as cultivated at that period by the most refined nations of Europe; published an Itinerary, which contains this remarkable paffage: " The attention of this people to mulical inftruments I find worthy of com-" mendation; in which their skill is, beyond all comparison superior to that of any nation I have seen : ". For in these the modulation is not flow and solemn, as in the instruments of Britain, to which " we are accustomed; but the founds are rapid and precipitate, yet at the fame time fweet and " pleafing. It is wonderful how in fuch precipitate rapidity of the fingers the mufical proportions " are preferved; and by their art faultlefs throughout, in the midft of their complicated modula-" tions and most intricate arrangement of notes, by a rapidity fo fweet, a regularity fo irregular, " a concord fo difcordant, the melody is rendered harmonious and perfect; whether the chords of the " Diatefferon or Diapente, are struck together, yet they always begin in a foft mood, and end in the " fame, that all may be perfected in the fweetnefs of delicious founds. They enter on, and again " leave their modulations with fo much fubtilty, and the tinglings of the fmall ftrings fport with fo " much freedom under the deep notes of the Bafs, delight with fo much delicacy, and footh fo foftly, " that the excellence of their art feems to lie in concealing it."\*

But fuch was the celebrity of Irish Music a century preceding the arrival of Cambrensis, that the Welsh Bards, so celebrated for their knowledge in this art, condescended to seek for and receive instructions from those of Ireland, of which this passage of Powell, their own historian, in the sixteenth

• Translation from Topog. Hib. Diftinct. 3. c. 11.

century,

century, is evidence :—" Gruffydh ap Conan," fays Powell, " brought over with him from Ireland " divers cunning muficians into Wales, who (he boldly afferts) devifed in a manner all the inftrumental " Mufic, that is now there ufed : as appeareth, as well by the books written of the fame, as alfo by " the names of the tunes and meafures ufed among them to this date." This affertion of Powell receives fupport from the learned *Selden* : " Their mufique" (fays he, fpeaking of the Welfh) " for " the most part came out of Ireland with Gruffydh ap Conan, Prince of North Wales, about King " Stephen's time."

Cardoc, a Welfinman alfo, in the twelfth century, without any of that illiberal partiality fo common with national writers, affures us that the Irifh devifed all the inftruments, tunes and meafures, in use among the Welfh.

- The Bards, according to the testimoney of Strabo, Diodorus and Ammianus Marcellinus, existed among the ruder branches of the Celtic tribes, before the time of Augustus. We find them under the fame name in Ireland from the earliest period of our history down to the year 1738, when Carolan died-who feems to have been born to render the termination of his order memorable and brilliant. If we reflect upon the difadvantages under which he laboured; born blind-with flender opportunities of acquiring ideas, the inhabitant of a country recently defolated by a civil war, the flames of which had fcarcely fubfided, and add to this, his own propenfity to idleness and diffipation, we cannot but be aftonished at the prodigious powers of his mind. He has occasionally tried almost every stile in Music; the elegiac, the feftive, the amorous, and facred; and has fo much excelled in each, that we fcarcely know to which of them his genius was best adapted. His first composition was amorous and plaintive, called " Bridget Cruife," addreffed to a lady, to whom he was tenderly attached, without the hope of fuccefs. He is faid to have dedicated fifteen different pieces to her, none of which are contained in this collection. The first was either originally imperfect, or the copy procured of it fo corrupt, that a Bass could not be adopted to it. His last tune was inscribed to his physician, Dr. Stafford. He composed the Fairy Queen, Rofe Dillon, and others of his ferious pieces, early in life; but after having established a reputation, and addicted himself too much to festive company and the bottle, he dedicated his time to the composition of his Planxties, which required no labour or affiduity. We may form fome idea of the fertility of his genius from this circumstance, that one harper who attended the Belfast Meeting, and who had never feen him, or was not taught directly by any perfon, that had had an opportunity of copying from him, had acquired upwards of an hundred of his tunes, which he faid conftituted but a very inconfiderable part of the real number.

As Carolan never taught any itinerant pupils, except his own fon, (who had no mufical genius) and as we have never heard that any of his pieces were committed to writing until feveral years after his death, when young Carolan, under the patronage of Dr. Delany, edited a fmall volume, we need not wonder if nine tenths of the whole be irreparably loft.

In Carolan's Concerto (No. 42)—and in his Madam Cole (No. 16)—the practitioner will perceive evident imitations of Correlli, in which the exuberant fancy of that admired composer is happily copied. In the ancient air Gradh gan fios, or Love in Secret, (No. 14) he will be charmed with one of the most pleasing strains that any country has produced; it is accordingly so old, that no trace could be discovered of the century in which it was produced.

+ Hiftory of Camb. p. 191. Edit. 1584. 1 Notes on DRAYT. Polyelb. Song.

## PREFACE.

The words of *Coolin* were extant in the reign of Henry VIII. a very modern period when compared with that in which the air was composed. *Scarfuint na Gompanach*, or the *Parting of Friends*, (No. 25) is confidered as very ancient. It is often played by harpérs when the audience are about to feparate, and it is a popular opinion that it was composed while the Irish groaned under the oppression of the Danes, and were forced to conceal themselves in caverns and sequestered places.

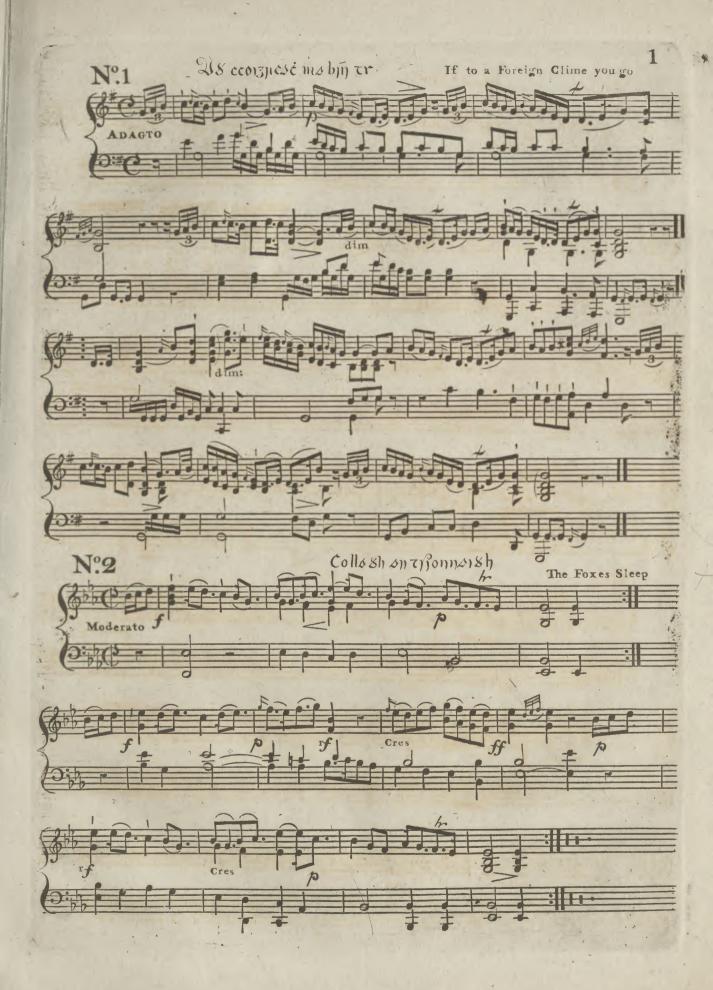
The tune called *Thugamar fein a Sambra lin*, (No. 61) is probably extremely antient. It was fung by the band of virgins that went out of Dublin to welcome the Duke of Ormond, when he landed in Ireland. The ancient air *Ta an famradh teacht*, or the *Summer is coming*, (No. 7) is ufed upon the opening of fummer in different parts of the kingdom. Strange as it may appear, this proves to be the fame fong in effence, both as to poetry and mufic, which Dr. Burney has published and written fo voluminous a critique on, as the first piece of Mufic ever fet in fcore in Great Britain. The extreme improbability of its being *borrowed* by the ancient Irish, from a country that has no national Music of its own (the Welsh excepted) is fufficiently evident. The devoted attachment to their own Music, and the praifes it received from other countries; their ignorance of the English language, and their rooted aversion to their invaders, were effectual bars to any fuch plagiarism or adoption.

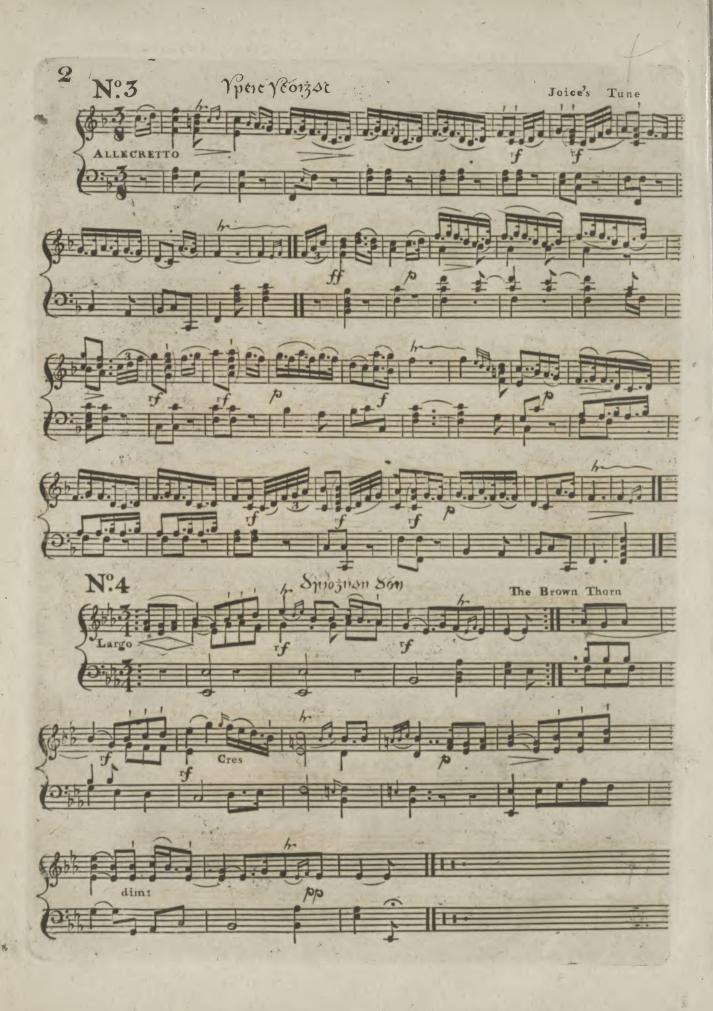
The air of *Ad ccoigreac ma bin tu*, or *If to a Foreign clime you go*, (No. 1,) procured in the county of Mayo, we have reafon to believe the oldeft extant. It was fung by only one perfon who was of great age, and although numbers were prefent, few knew it even by name, but they all appeared greatly delighted with the composition.

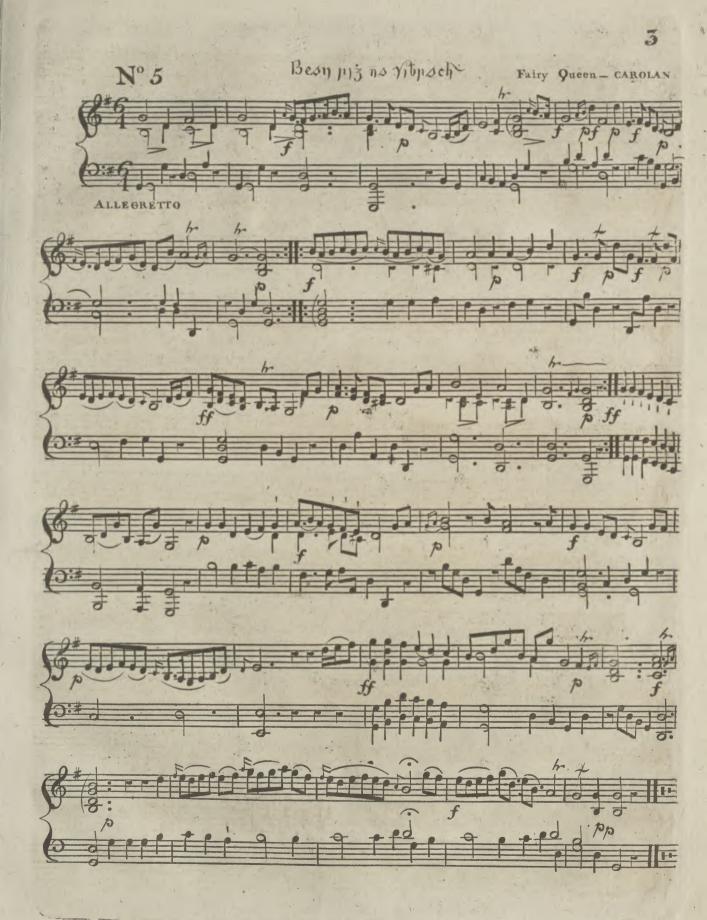
To enumerate all those airs, that address themselves to the heart, and harmonize with the finest feelings of our nature, would extend the bounds of this preface to an unwarrantable length. It is to be remarked, however, that several of the airs in the following Collection were not taken from the Irish harp, but from fongsters; and therefore as they now stand, are not always adapted to that instrument.

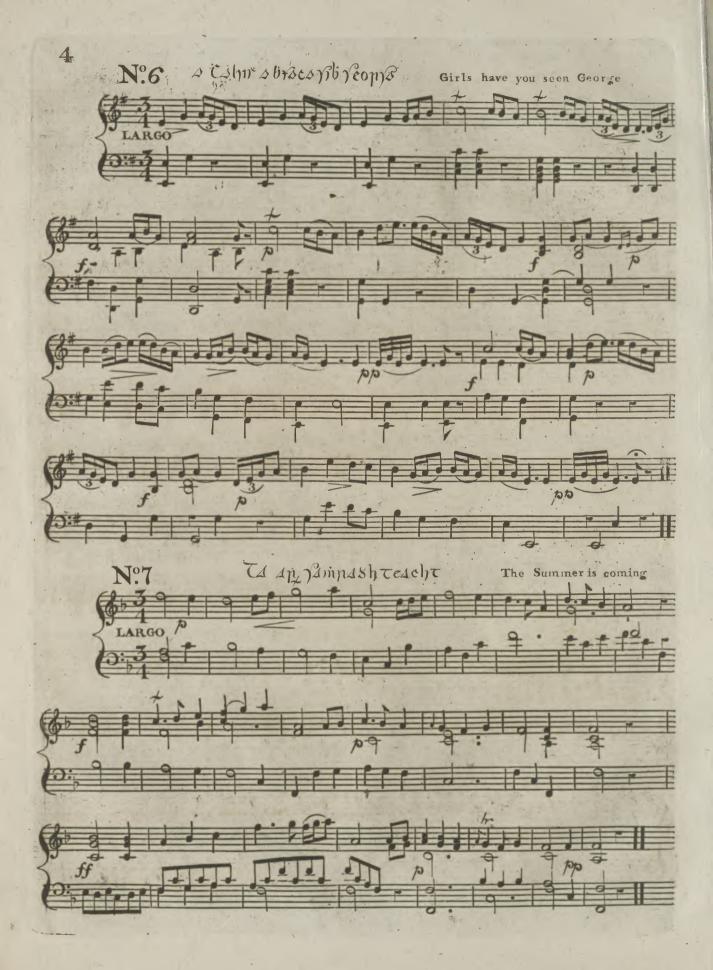
We cannot conclude without ferioufly urging gentlemen in the fouthern parts of Ireland, to follow the example of the Belfaft Society, by promoting fimilar meetings of the harpers in their refpective provinces. It is a debt which every man owes to his country, to fearch for and perpetuate the records of other days, to oppofe, as far as he can, the deftructive ravages of time, and to render permanent the fleeting productions of every fpecies of genius; productions of an era fo remote in the prefent cafe, as to baffle our attempts to afcertain their exact flation on the fcale of events. The veneration in which the Mufic of Ireland, with every veftige of Irifh antiquity, has been held by our anceftors, and the refpect it has received for fo many centuries from foreign nations, feem well calculated to excite correfponding feelings in their defcendants. Shall we fuffer them to perifh in our hands at the clofe of perhaps the laft century in which a fingle new ray of light can be ftruck out amidft the gloom, with which time envelops the earlieft and often the moft interefting of its works? In paying them all due attention, we do not merely gratify the natural feeling of national pride; we are tracing the progrefs of the human mind, and endeavouring to reftore a page in the hiftory of man.

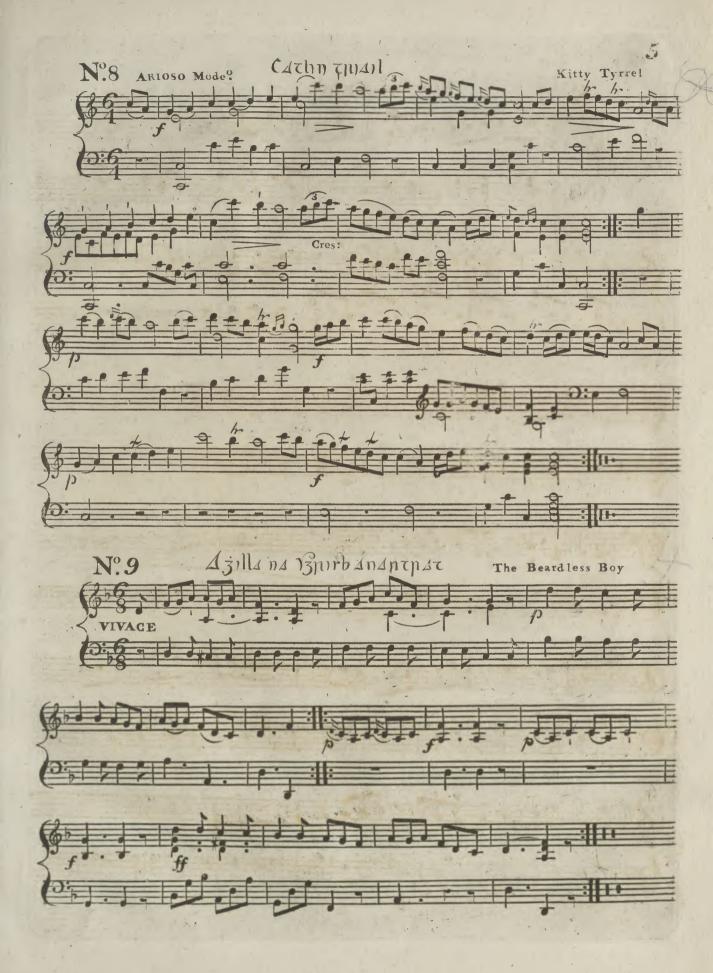
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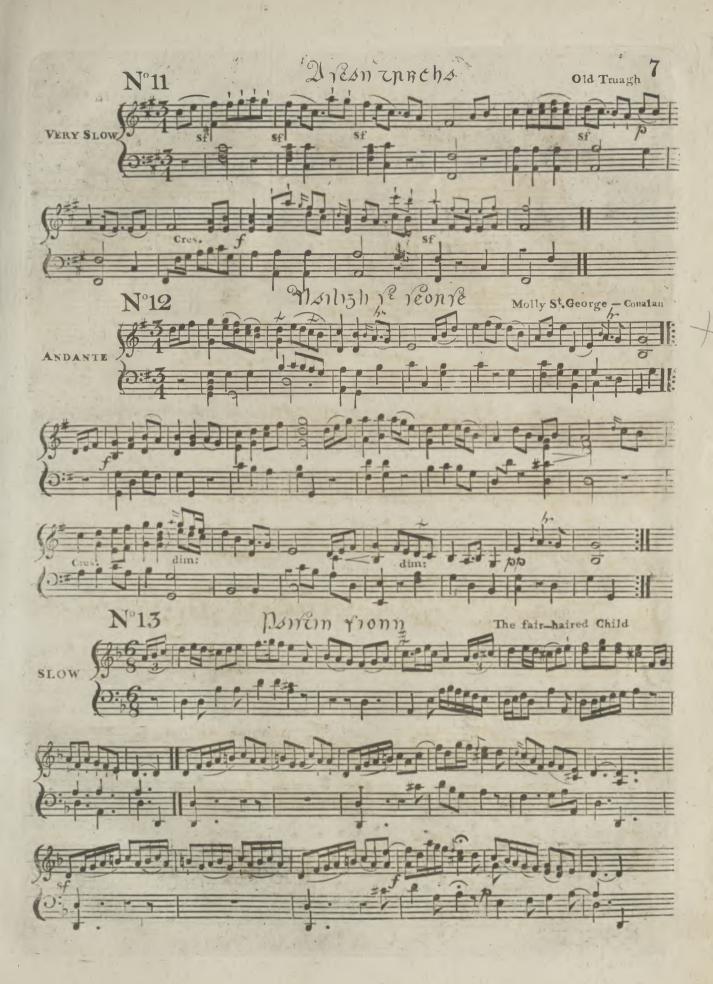


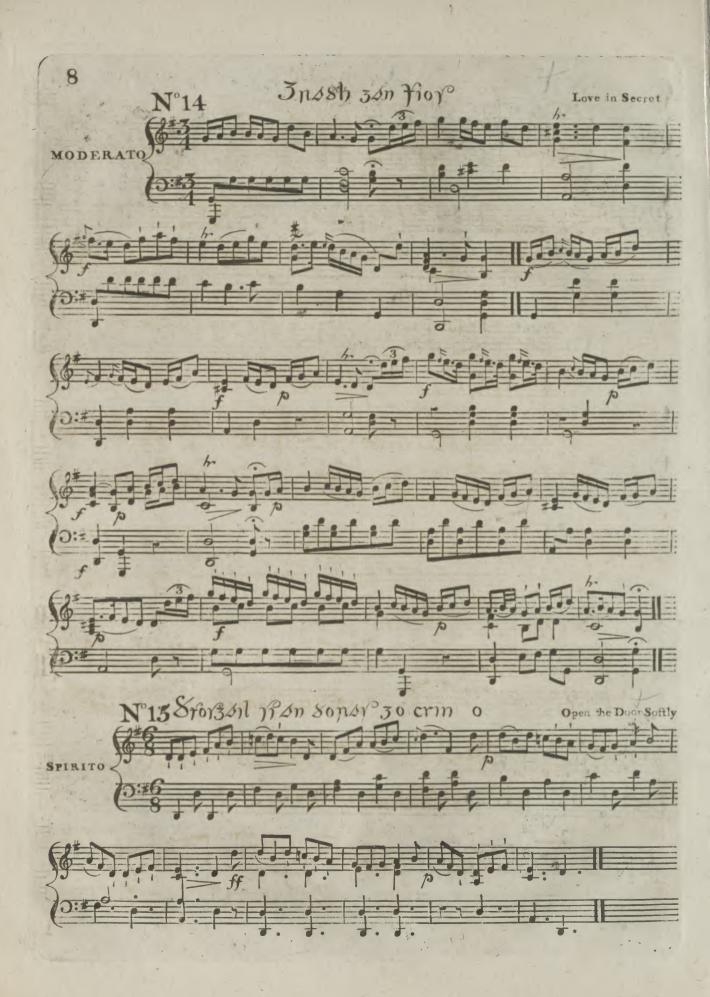


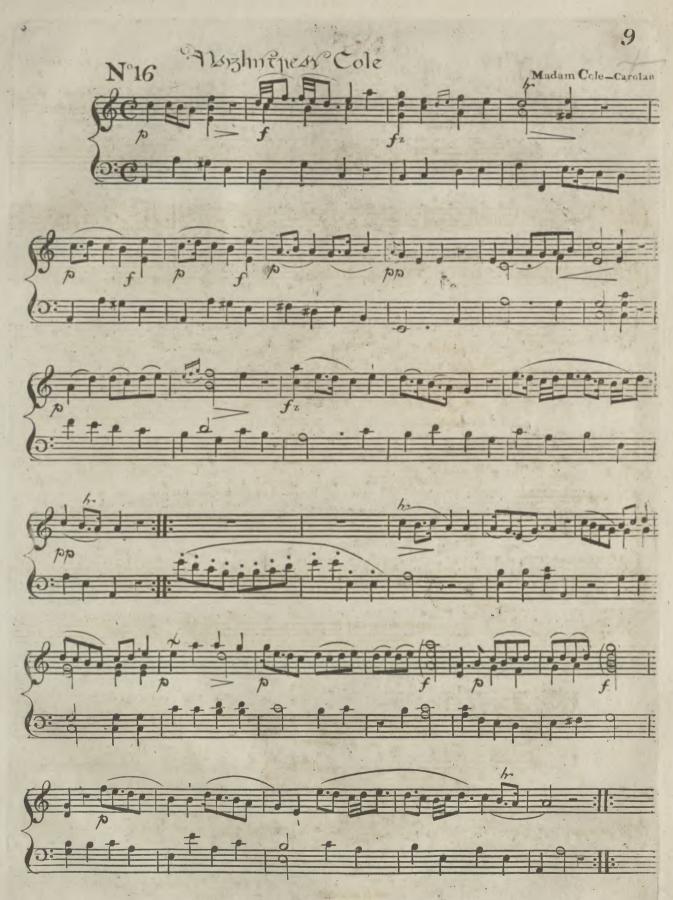




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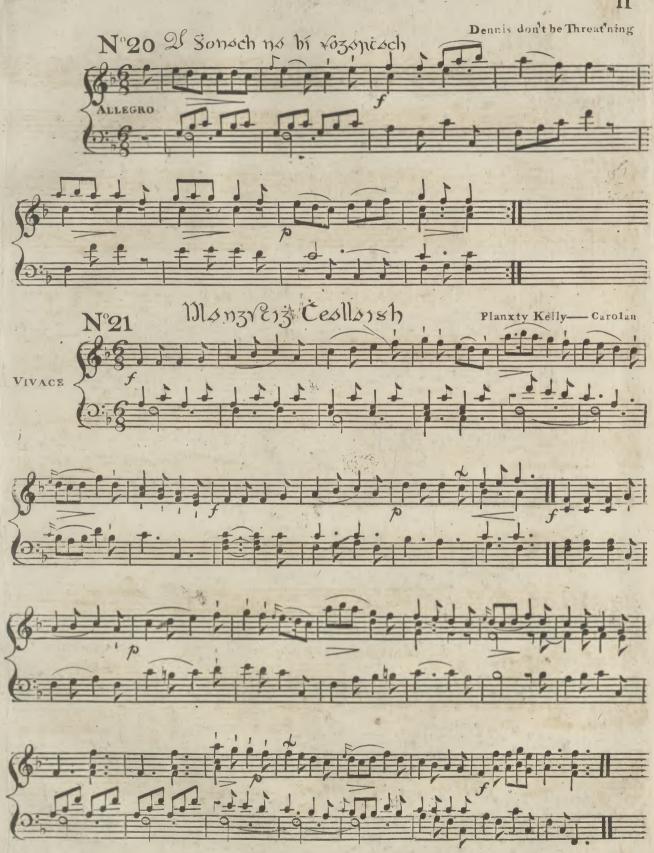


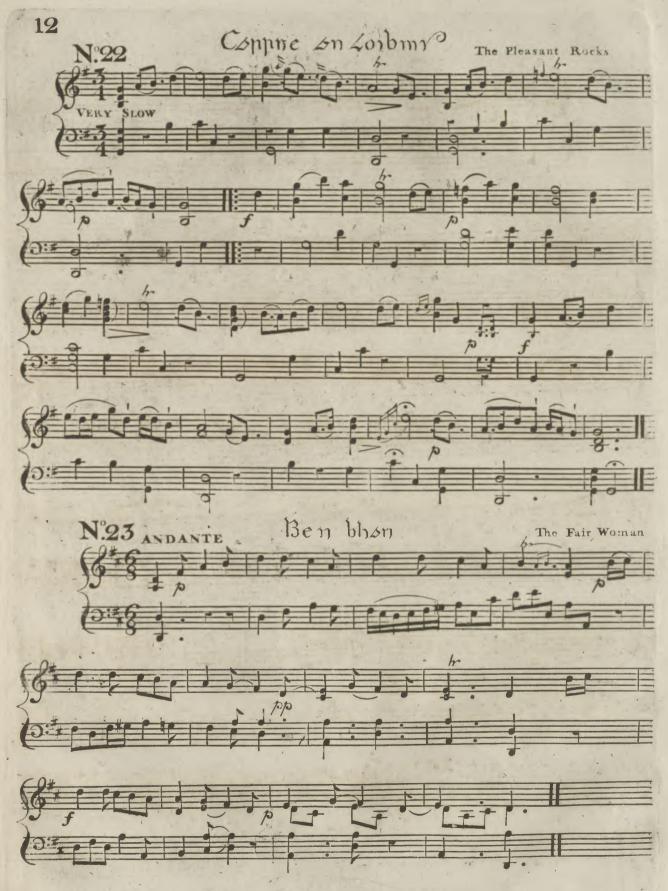




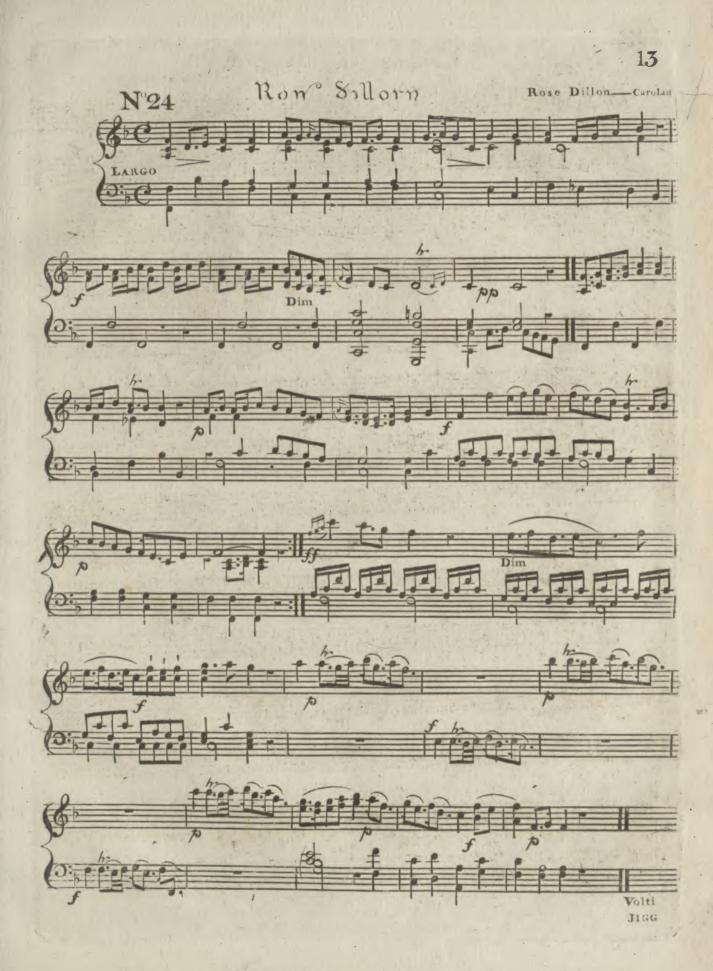
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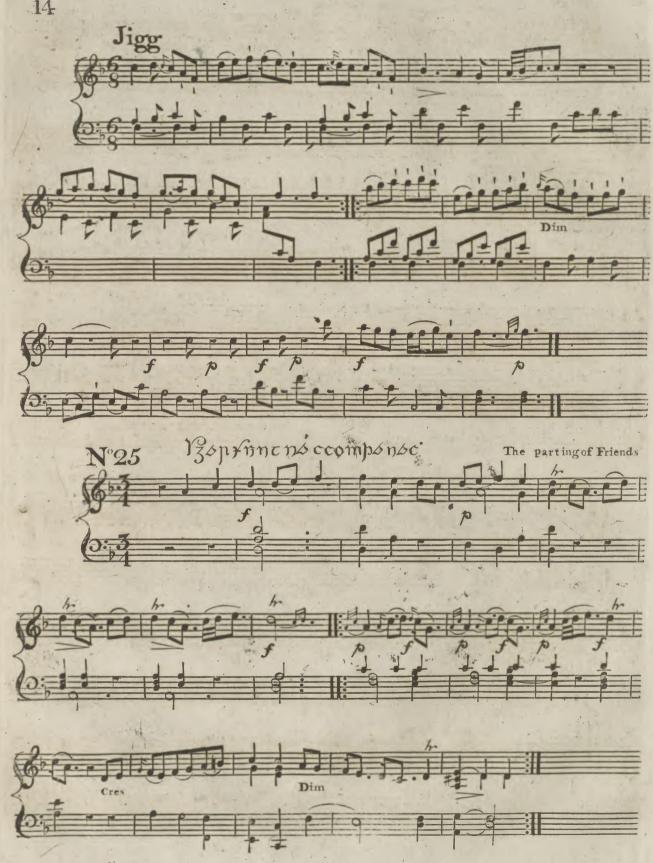
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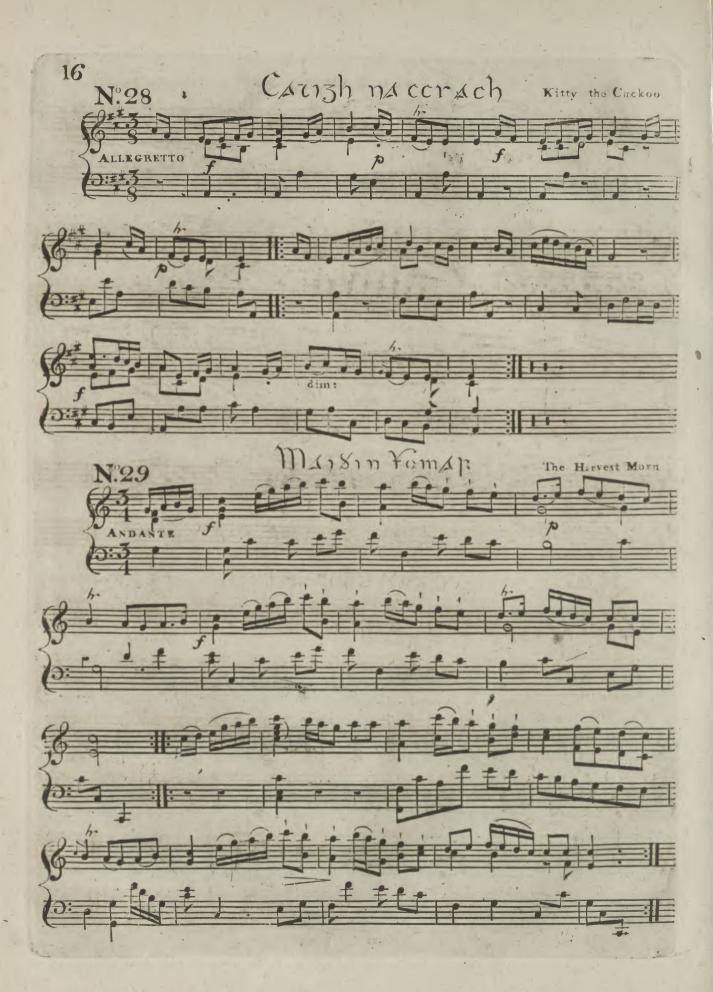


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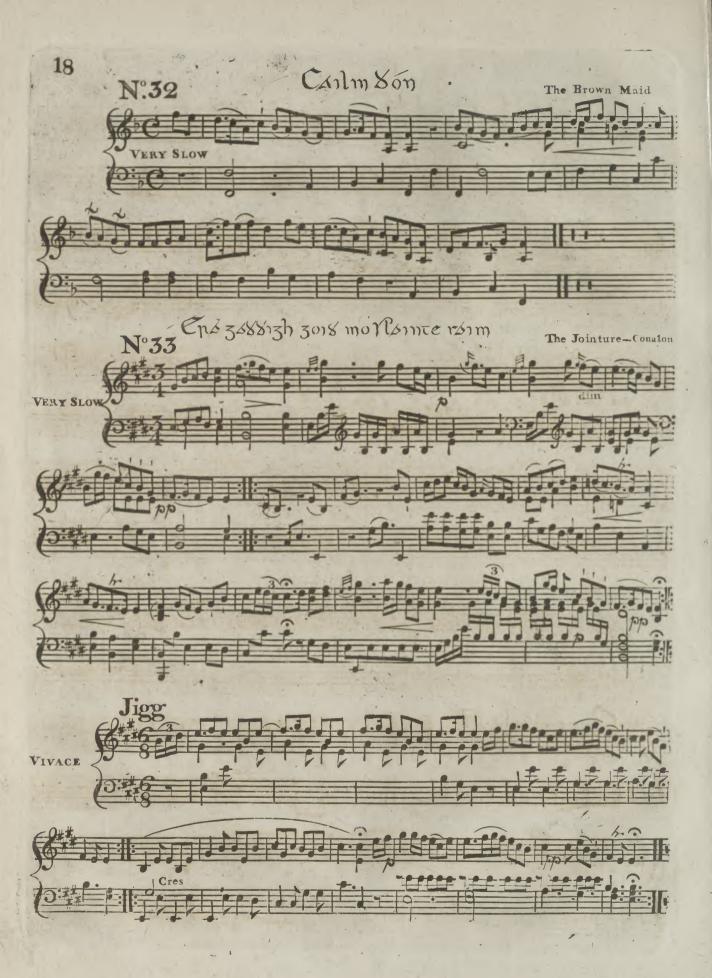


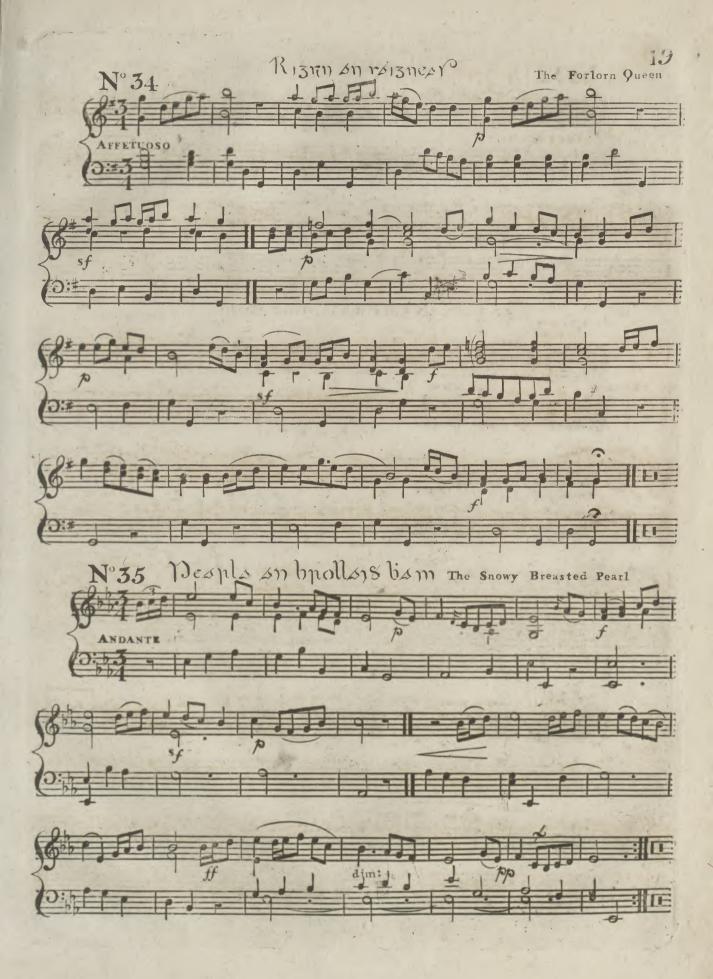


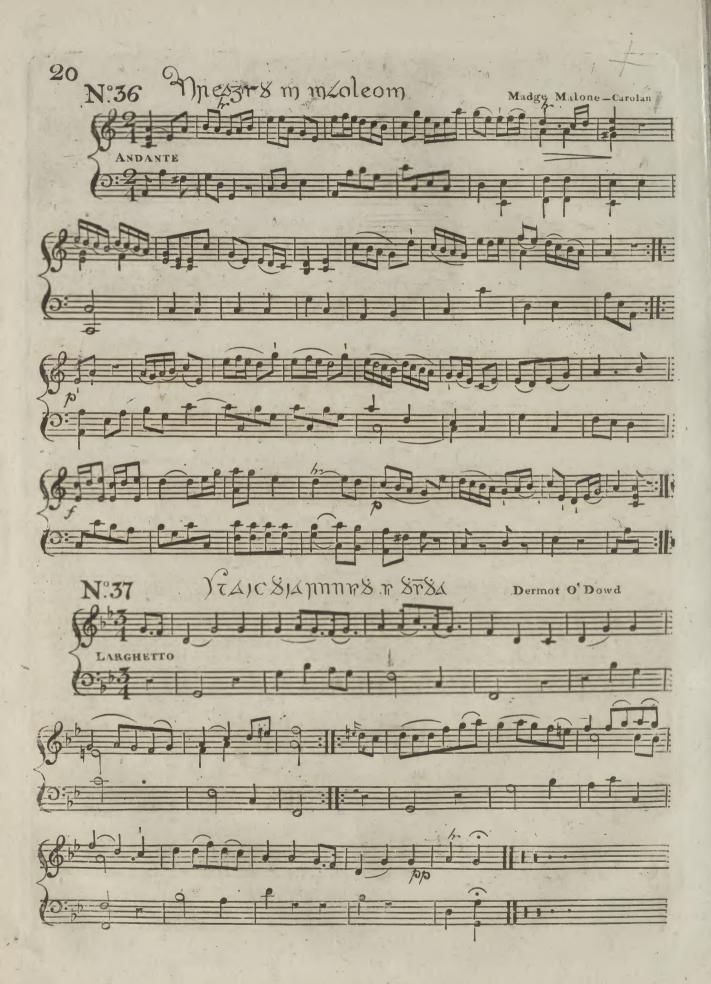




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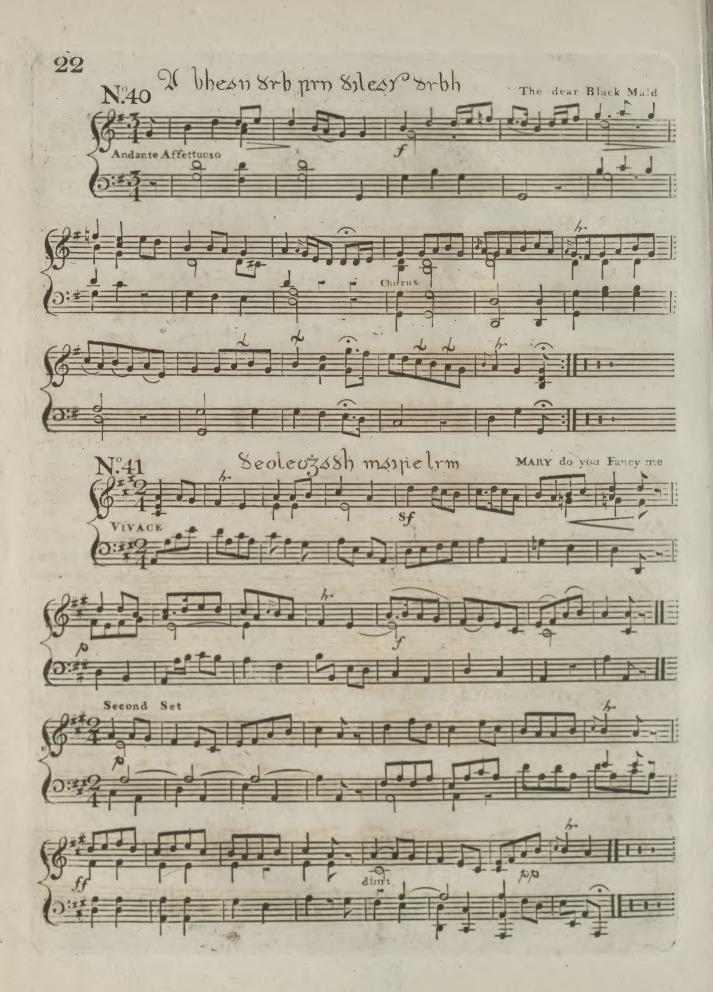


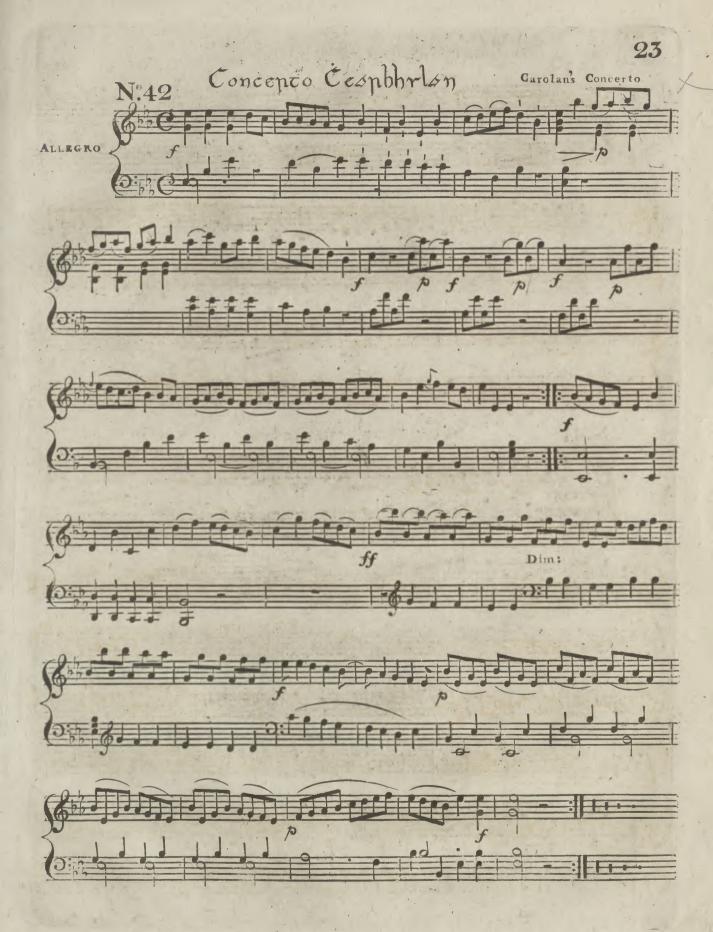




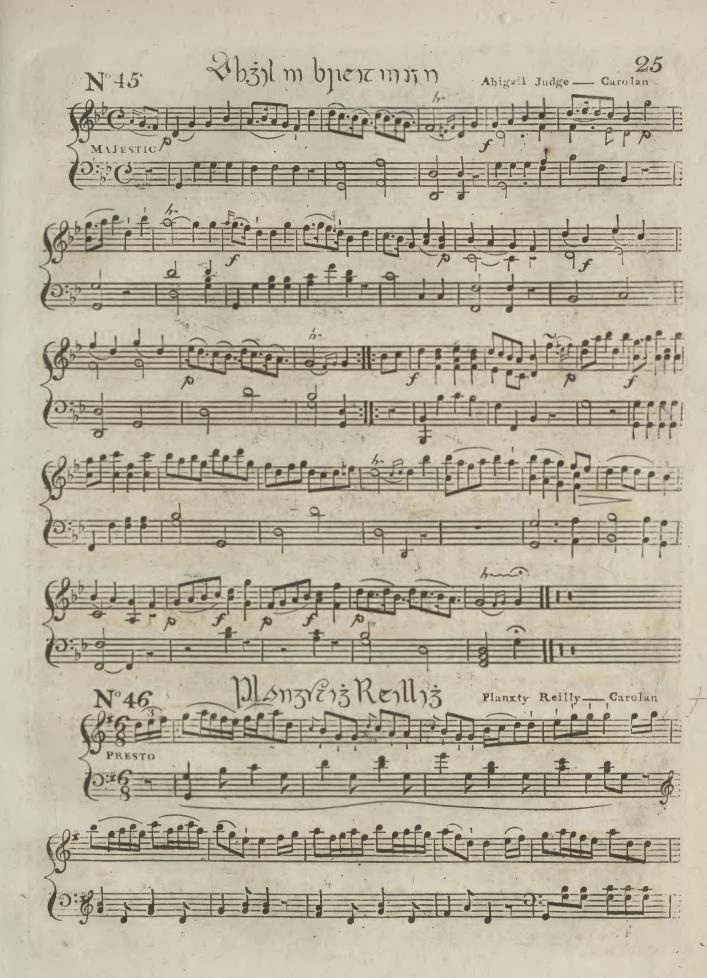
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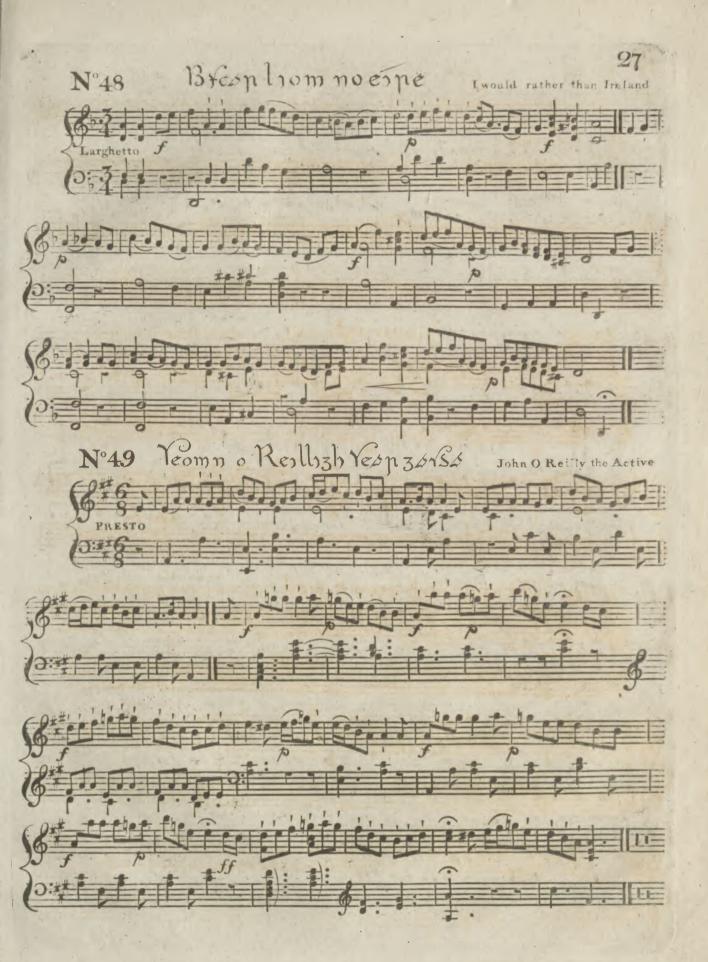


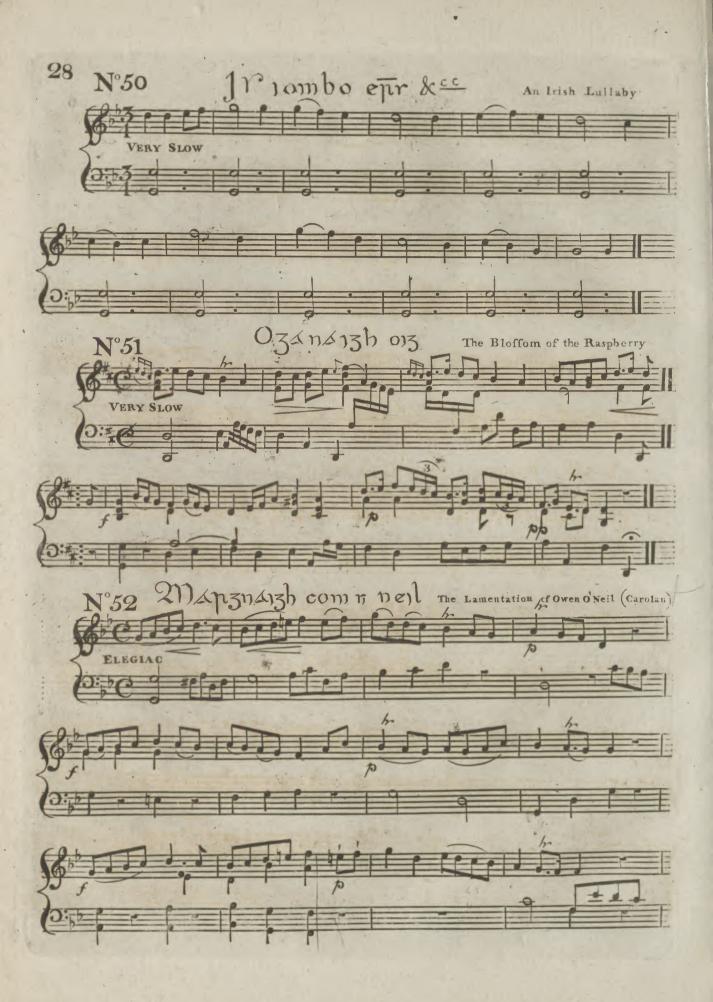


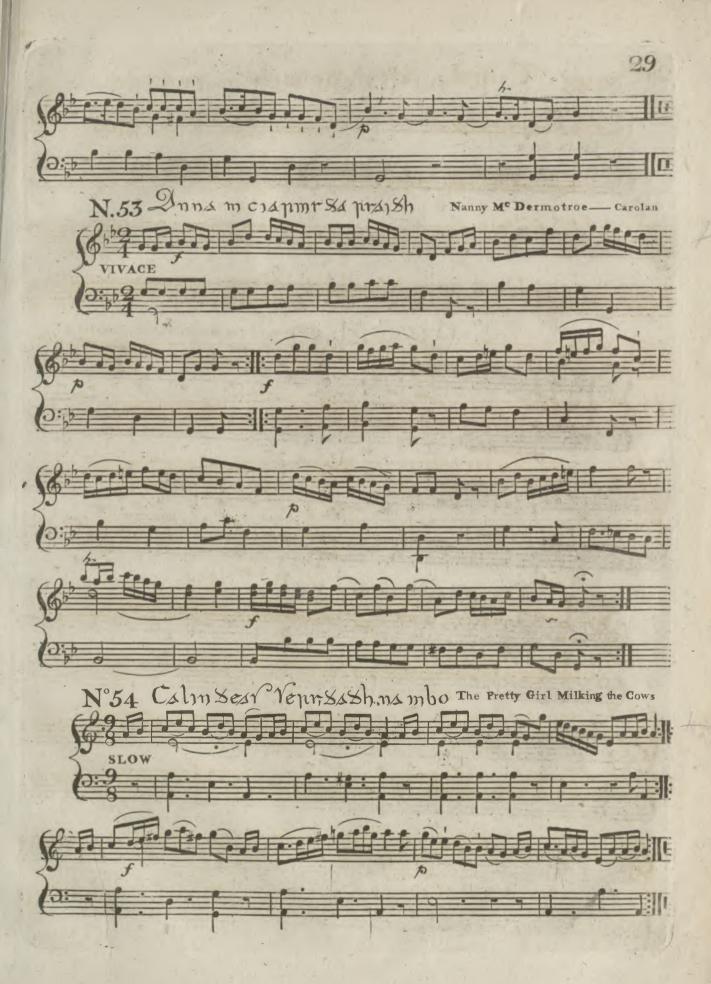
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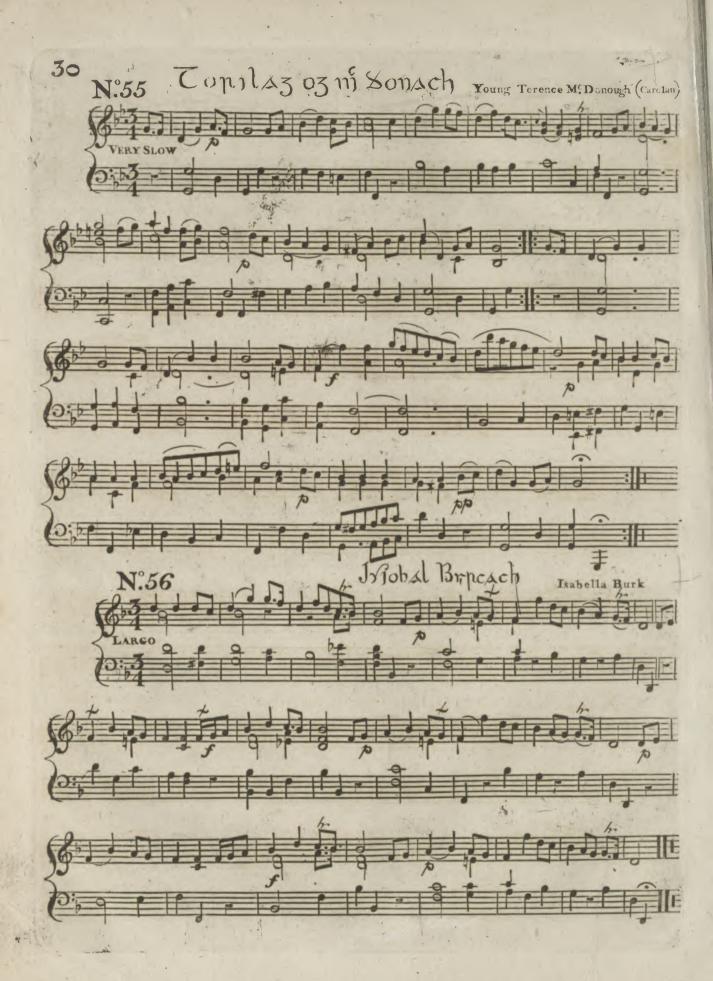


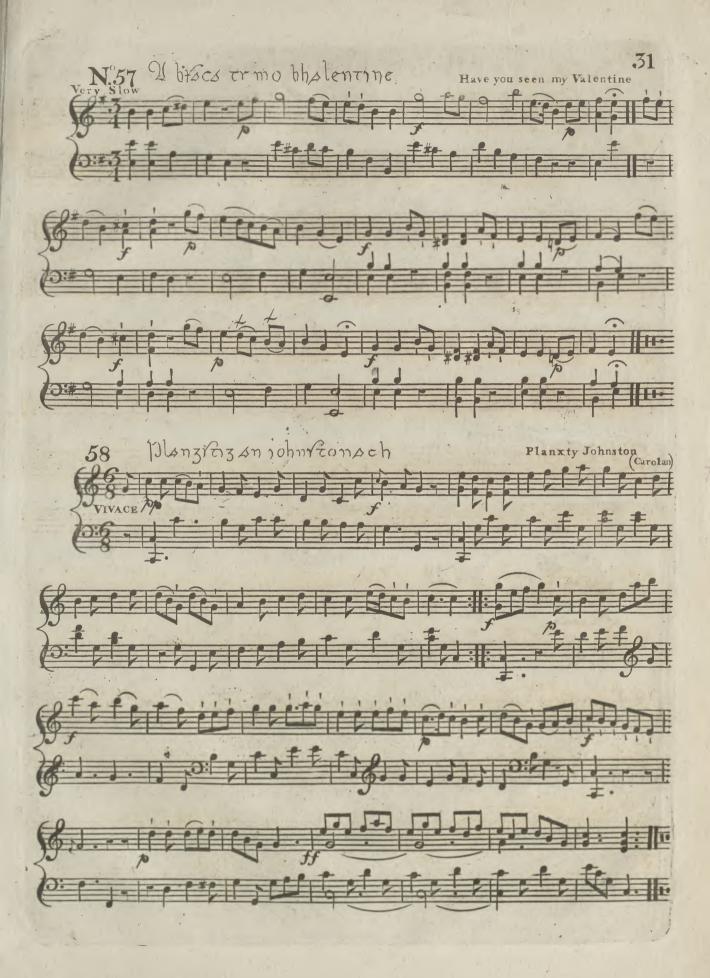
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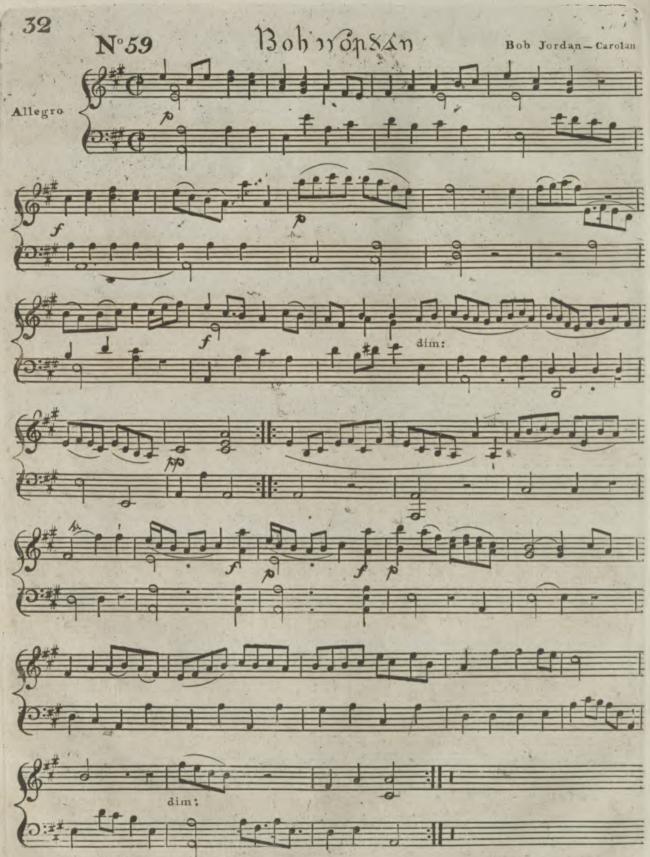






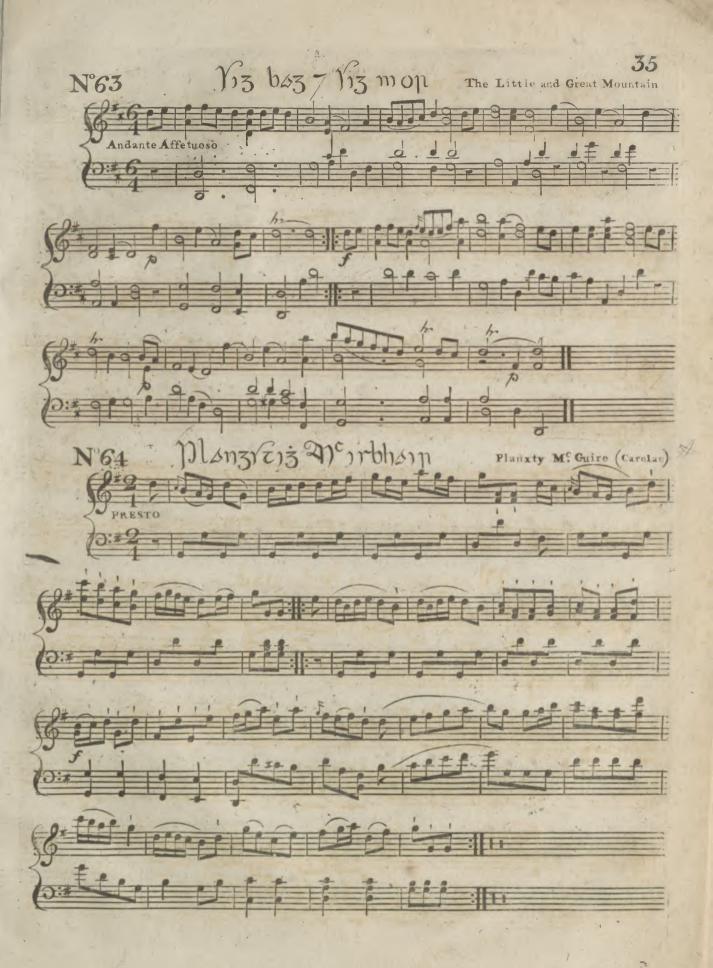






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